



[G W F Hegel, 1770-1831](#)

Excerpts on Essence and Notion

Andy Blunden's next two lectures, for which he chose the excerpts from Hegel that are attached (and downloadable via the link below) begin with **Being** and go via **Essence**, to **Notion**, a journey that we have already taken with him once. Hegel also makes the same trip twice, once in the Shorter Logic, and another time in the Science of Logic.

So let's just say that repetition is no bad thing when it comes to study.

We will return to Andy's marvellously illuminating lectures in the second instalment of this part of our course on Hegel, but let us note for now part of the quote from Hegel's "*Shorter Logic*" that Andy gives in the beginning of the first of these two

lectures. Says Hegel:

“Most commonly the refutation is taken in a purely negative sense to mean that the system refuted has ceased to count for anything, has been set aside and done for. Were it so, the history of philosophy would be, of all studies, most saddening, displaying, as it does, the refutation of every system which time has brought forth. Now although it may be admitted that every philosophy has been refuted, it must be in an equal degree maintained that no philosophy has been refuted. And that in two ways. For first, every philosophy that deserves the name always embodies the Idea: and secondly, every system represents one particular factor or particular stage in the evolution of the Idea. The refutation of a philosophy, therefore, only means that its barriers are crossed, and its special principle reduced to a factor in the completer principle that follows.”

And then at the end of the two Andy Blunden lectures, he writes: **“Development is the struggle of opposites which do not disappear”**.

This is the unity-and-struggle-of-opposites that we have picked up from Marx and Engels but which actually comes from their predecessor, Hegel, in exactly the manner that Hegel describes in the quotation above it.

It is wrong and doubly wrong to say that Marx and/or Engels refuted and did away with Hegel, as some have said and many more have assumed was the case. Hegel remains, and will

always remain, *“a factor in the completer principle that follows”*.

Now frankly, in the Communist University, we would love to find in any book the most concise, lucid passage, and if possible a single paragraph or sentence, that gave us the whole content of the book summed up. Through Clausewitz, Marx, Engels and Lenin we have sought and found the richest and most concentrated “short texts” to use for the stimulation of our dialogues.

Also frank is Hegel - a very careful man - who has warned us from the start that he does not want us to be doing any such thing with his work.

Be that as it may, the four excerpts that Andy Blunden picked out on this occasion may be the closest we come to a short text from Hegel, in his own words, which would go towards fulfilling Lenin’s insistence that we must *“thoroughly study and understand the whole of Hegel’s Logic.”*

They cover **Action and Reaction, Content and Form, Notion, and Development**.

There are many cards in the Hegel pack. These four are as near to being a “full house” as we are likely to find. Not forgetting that our first business with Hegel is to understand what Marx got from Hegel.

Hegel is not always obscure. The following is clear enough:

“Real works of art are those where content and form exhibit a thorough identity. The content of the Iliad, it may be said, is the Trojan war, and especially the wrath of Achilles. In that we have everything, and yet very little after all; for the Iliad is made an Iliad by the poetic form, in which that content is moulded.

“The content of Romeo and Juliet may similarly be said to be the ruin of two lovers through the discord between their families: but something more is needed to make Shakespeare's immortal tragedy.”

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Excerpts on Essence and Notion](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).